

Worksession

Agenda Item #	8
Meeting Date	January 5, 2004
Prepared By	Kathy Porter, Mayor
Reviewed by	Richard M. Finn, City Mgr.

Discussion Item	Council Rules and Procedures
Background	On December 15, the Council had an informal discussion of rules and procedures. The purpose of the January 5 discussion is to decide how to codify the agreements the Council reached on December 15.
Policy	The City Council may set its own rules and procedures.
Fiscal Impact	
Attachments	Previous Council rules and procedures resolution “Green Sheet” of current council rules and procedures dealing with public participation.
Recommendation	
Special Consideration	

HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN A CITY COUNCIL MEETING

There are two kinds of city council meetings: legislative sessions and worksessions. Legislative sessions are generally held on the second and fourth Mondays of the month. At legislative sessions, the council votes on ordinances and resolutions.

Worksessions are generally held on the first and third Mondays of the month, but may also be held on other Mondays, after a legislative session. At worksessions, the council discusses issues that may become future legislative items, but does not take votes.

Council meetings begin at 7:30 pm. At the beginning of each meeting, there is a time set aside for public comments. At legislative sessions, the council also takes public comment on each ordinance or resolution before the council votes on it. Because there is a time set aside for comments on each issue at a legislative session, you are asked hold your comments on that issue until the council gets to it, rather than speaking to the issue at the public comment period.

The council may also hold public hearings on an issue, usually at the beginning of a legislative session. Public hearings are a more structured way for the council to get public comment.

For large public hearings, you may be asked to sign up in order to speak, and the speakers will be called to the podium to speak in the order in which they are signed up. In other cases, come to the podium when you are recognized by the mayor.

When you come to the podium, please identify yourself with your name and the street on which you live. You will generally have three minutes to speak. The light on the podium will be green when you begin speaking, turn yellow when you have one minute left, and turn red when your time is up. The purpose of the time limit is to allow everyone who wants to speak to have an opportunity to do so in a timely manner. Unless the number of people speaking is unusually large, you will have another chance to speak after everyone else has finished. Because speakers will have a second opportunity to finish any unfinished statements, the council discourages the practice of ceding time to another speaker. The council wants to hear from everyone who comes to speak.

If you are unable to attend a public hearing, you may submit your testimony in writing to the City Clerk via clerk@takomagov.org or by mail to City Clerk's Office, 7500 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park, MD 20912. Written testimony will be copied to the Council and included in the official record of the hearing.

At worksessions, members of the council discuss issues among themselves and with the city staff. You may make comments at the public comment period at the beginning of the meeting. Occasionally, the council will ask a resident who is involved in an issue they are discussing to join them in the discussion. If you want to be involved in a council discussion at a worksession, let your councilmember know of your interest, preferably before the worksession.